



**The Uniqueness, the *Tsimtsum*,
Adam Kadmon**

Introduction

In the beginning, there was no existence except His presence. His light or energy being of such intensity, no existence in His proximity was possible. His first act in this creation was to contract His light from a certain space, so as to reduce its intensity, and allow created beings to exist. After this contraction, a ray of His light entered this empty space, and formed the first Sephirot. A first world; "Adam Kadmon" was created, from it; came out other lights - Sephirot. These Sephirot, which did not have individual receptacles, went back up to their source, and came out differently. This is called 'Olam Ha'Akudim (the world of the attached).

a) Until the world was created, He and His Name were One.

He willed [to create], and contracted His light to create all beings, by giving them a space. There is no existence that does not have its space.

The space [from where the light contracted] being circular, the *Ein Sof*²¹ encircles it from all sides. A ray [*Kav*] emerged from Him, entered on one side, and made all the levels²².

א. עד שלא נברא העולם היה הוא ושמו אחד.

רצה וצמצם אורו לברוא כל הבריות, נתן להם מקום. אין לך דבר שאין לו מקום.

נמצא המקום שווה לכולם. והאין סוף ב"ה מקיפו לכל צד. וקו יוצא ממנו לצד אחד, בוקע ונכנס, ועושה כל המדרגות.

At first, the Creator was alone, occupying all space with His light²³. His light without end, borders or limit, filled everything. He was not bestowing his influence, because there was no one to receive it. When He willed to create, He started to influence. His light being of such holiness and intensity, it is not possible for any being to exist in its proximity. His first act in this creation, was then to set limits to His light, so that it would not emanate with its full force.

²¹ The infinite, literally, "without end"

²² *Sephirot*

²³ Emanation, presence

By these boundaries, He revealed the concepts of rigor and limit, needed by the created beings, and gave a space for all the created to exist. This is called the "*Tsimtsum*"²⁴ of the *Ein Sof*; the retraction of His light from a certain space, and encircling it. This round space is called "*Hallal*"²⁵, and contains all possibilities of existence for separated entities, given that they are distanced from the intensity of His light.

When His light retracted, forming the round space, a trace of it, called the *Reshimu*²⁶, remained inside. This lower intensity light, allowed a space of existence (*Makom*), for all the created worlds and beings. By "space", one should not understand a physical space, but rather a possibility of existence. The roots of all future existence and events are in the "*Reshimu*". Nothing can come into existence, without having its root in this imprint. However, only the Emanator decides what comes to existence, since He guides all.

From the *Ein Sof*, a straight ray of light called "*Kav*"²⁷, entered the *Hallal*. The combination of the *Kav* and the *Reshimu* is what will give existence to the *Sephirot* with which He governs the worlds. What the *Kav* is to the *Reshimu*, the soul is to the body.

They [The *Sephirot*] are ten levels, with incommensurable

עשר מדרגות הן, מדתן שאין להם סוף.
עשרה עגולים, ויושרם

²⁴ Retraction of His light

²⁵ Empty space, vacuum

²⁶ Imprint - trace

²⁷ Ray

qualities. Ten encircling, and in their middle, ten linear, which have the qualities of the *Ein Sof*: kindness, rigor and mercy.

He directs His creatures with justice, rewarding and punishing, returning all evil to goodness, and bringing all His creatures to His will. As it is written: "I am first and I am last, and beside Me there is no G-d." (Isaiah, 44, 6).

All that G-d created in His world, He created only for His glory, as it is said: "All that is called by My Name and glory, I created, formed and even made." (Isaiah, 43, 7). And He said: "G-d will reign for ever." (Shemot, 15, 18)

באמצעם,
שבהם מידותיו של מקום –
חסד, דין, רחמים.

מנהג כל בריותיו במשפט,
משכיר ומעניש,
ומחזיר כל רעה לטובה,
ומביא בריותיו לרצונו.
וכן הוא אומר
(ישעיה מד, י):
"אני ראשון ואני אחרון ומבלעדי
אין אלהים".
(כז-כח)

כל מה שברא הקב"ה בעולמו
לא בראו אלא לכבודו,
שנאמר (ישעיה מג, ז):
"כל הנקרא בשמי ולכבודי
בראתיו יצרתיו אף עשיתיו".

ואומר (שמות טו, יח):
"ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד".

After entering the Hallal, the *Kav* made ten circles encircling one another, but still maintaining a straight shape²⁸. These ten circles are called *Sephirot Ha'igulim* (encircling

²⁸ The *Kav*

Sephirot). They are in charge of the general guidance of the worlds, and are not influenced by the actions of men.

From the *Kav*, another ten *Sephirot* were formed, but this time in a linear arrangement, and later in three columns: right, left and middle, representing the guidance of the world in the manner of *Hesed*, *Din* and *Rahamim* (Kindness, rigor and mercy). This guidance is dependent on time, and the actions of men.

b) Ten *Sephirot*, internal and external; their shape, as of a man²⁹, the first of them; *Adam Kadmon* (Primordial Man). From the lights that were invested inside of him, came out [ramifications] his four senses: sight, hearing, smell and speech.

ב. עשר ספירות פנימיות
 וחיצוניות דמיון כמראה אדם.
 הראשון שבכולם - אדם קדמון.
 וממה שנגבל בפנים
 יוצאים ארבע חושים חלק
 ממנו: רש"ד. (כט)

The *Sephirot* are the qualities or particularities of forces, by which the *Ein Sof* directs the worlds. His light is perfect, and cannot be measured by any definition or limiting terms. If we think about definitions, we introduce a notion of limit, or absence of its opposite. However, the concept of limitlessness is beyond our human comprehension, and we therefore have to use terms accessible to our understanding. Being ourselves distinct separate beings, we cannot grasp the concept of the "non-distinct", everything we know is finite, by having a measure or an

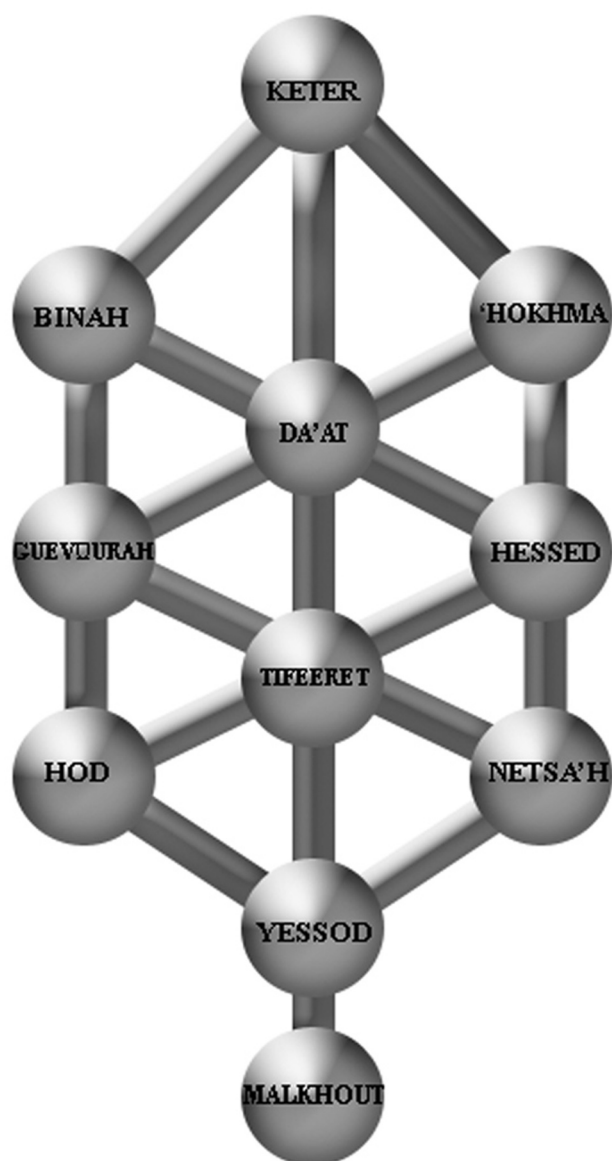
²⁹ The shape of the *Sephirotic* tree resembles the shape of man

opposite. The term 'quality' is used here only to help us understand the effect of His light upon the guidance of the worlds.

Each *Sephira* is composed of a vessel called *Keli*³⁰, which holds its part of light called *Or*³¹. There are many details to this union of *Or* and *Keli*, as we will see further on. There is no difference in the *Or* itself; the difference comes from the particularity, or position of the *Sephira*. When we think about the guidance of the world, we see it directed by kindness, rigor or mercy, and this, in different measures, or mixtures. Since the *Sephirot* are the links between the Emanator and the guidance of the world, we now understand their division into these three qualities.

³⁰ Vessel, receptacle or vase

³¹ Light, energy or force



There are ten *Sephirot*, their names are: *Keter*, '*Hokhma*, *Binah*, '*Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferet*, *Netsa'h*, *Hod*, *Yesod*, *Malkhut*.

On the right, the '*Hesed* (kindness) column: '*Hokhma*, '*Hesed*, *Netsa'h*.

In the Middle, the *Rahamim* (mercy) column: *Keter*, *Tiferet*, *Yesod*, *Malkhut*

On the left, the *Din* (rigor) column: *Binah*, *Gevurah*, *Hod*.

There is one more *Sephira* called *Da'at*, which is counted when *Keter* is not, also in the *Rahamim* column.

Since the intention of the Creator is to bestow goodness on His creatures, all the levels of creation were put in place so His kindness could emanate to them, yet in such a way that they would be able to receive it. The first configuration, by which the emanated light was formed into ten *Sephirot*, is called *Adam Kadmon* (Primordial Man). It is the union between the *Reshimu* and the *Kav*, and from this first configuration, all the worlds came forth into existence.

The *Reshimu* is the exteriority, the *Kav* the interiority. *Adam Kadmon* being at such close proximity to the *Ein Sof*, we cannot grasp anything of its nature. Our understanding only starts from what came out of him, in the way of his senses; which are called his branches.

From *Adam Kadmon* emerged numerous worlds, four of which are called: sight, hearing, smell and speech; that spread out from his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. In the language of Kabbalah, we use names of body parts solely to illustrate the esoteric powers of these forces. It is understood, of course, that there is no physical existence at

these level. When we say ears, mouth, or any other physical expression, the goal is to describe the inner sense, or the position they represent.

These emanations are in the order of the name ה-ו-ה-ו-ה. All the configurations are drawn from the four letters of the Name of H. *B'H*, and their different spellings, which are called *Miluim*³².

- The four names are 'AV, SaG, MaH, BaN.
- (עב, סג, מה, בן)

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| <p>c) From the four letters of ה"ויה, there are Four <i>Miluim</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'AV, SaG, MaH, BaN) - <i>Ta'amim</i> [cantillation notes] - <i>Nekudot</i> [vowels] - <i>Tagin</i> [crowns] - <i>Autiot</i> [letters] <p>They include one, in the other³³.</p> <p>'AV) is in the head, its ramifications are mysterious; they come</p> | <p>ג. ד' אותיות הוי"ה ב"ה</p> <p>ד' מלואים: עסמ"ב</p> <p>עב, סג, מה, בן</p> <p>טנת"א</p> <p>טעמים.</p> <p>נקודות</p> <p>תגין</p> <p>אותיות</p> <p>נכללים אלו מאלו</p> <p>עב בגולגולת, ענפיו נעלמים,</p> <p>מן השערות של הראש הם יוצאים.</p> |
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³² Spelling of each letter separately

³³ The *Ta'amim* corresponds to the name of 'AV, the *Nekoudot* to the name of SaG, the *Tagin* to MaH and the *Autiot* to BaN. The *Ta'amim* also have an aspect of SaG (SaG of 'AV) and so on

³⁴ The *Sephirot*

out from the hair on the head.

סג (SaG) came out from the ears and downward. Its cantillation notes subdivide in three levels: higher, middle and lower. The higher [are] from the ears, the middle from the nose, and the lower from the mouth.

The higher came out from the ears, ten [*Sephirof*] from the right, and ten from the left, these internal, and these encircling. They all include in one ה which is shaped as ט ן far do they descend? Until the end of the beard on the chin.

The middle, came out from the nose, ten [*Sephirof*] from the right, and ten from the left, these internal, and these encircling. They approached³⁴ each other,

יצא סג מן האזנים ולמטה.
טעמים שלו ג' מינים:
עליונים, תחתונים, אמצעים.
עליונים באזנים,
אמצעים בחוטם,
תחתונים בפה

יצאו עליונים מן האזנים,
עשרה מהימין ועשרה מהשמאל,
אלו פנימים ואלו מקיפים לגביהם,
כלולים בה' אחת שצורתה ד"ו.
עד היכן הם יורדין ?
עד כנגד שבולת הזקן.

יצאו אמצעים מן החוטם,
עשרה מימין, ועשרה משמאל,
אלו פנימים, ואלו מקיפים
לגביהם.
והרי נתקרבו זה לגבי זה,
ונתגלתה ו' של ה' בששה אלפין.

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| <p>and then the \aleph of the \aleph was revealed, with six <i>alephs</i> [אאאאאא] coming out and downward, reaching to the chest.</p> | <p>יוצאים ויורדין עד החזה.</p> |
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Depending on the *Miluim* (spelling) of the letters, we obtain different names as:

- יוד הי ויו הי – עב - 'A"V = 72
- יוד הי ואו הי – סג - SaG = 63
- יוד הא ואו הא - מה - MaH = 45
- יוד הה וו הה – בן - BaN = 52

Each name can also be subdivided as:

'AV of 'AV, SaG of 'AV, MaH of 'AV ...BaN of BaN etc.

The reading of the Torah is incomplete without the *Ta'amim*, *Nekudot*, *Tagin*, and *Autiot*. The *Ta'amim* (cantillation marks) are of the highest level and are subdivided in three: higher, middle and lower. The *Nekudot* (vowels) are second, also in three levels: higher, middle and lower. The *Tagin* (crowns) are third, and appear on top of some letters only. The *Autiot* (letters) are fourth. When reading in a Sepher Torah, one sees the *Autiot* and the *Tagin*, has to guess logically the vowels, and learn by tradition the *Ta'amim*.

The "branches" are the lights that spread forth from *Adam Kadmon*, by way of its apertures in the head. The first one to come out is the branch of 'AV, which spread out from the hair on its head. This light is too lofty for our understanding.

From 'AV of SaG, came out three branches in the aspects of the *Ta'amim*: higher, middle and lower. They came out through the ears, nose, and mouth: the higher from the ears, the middle from the nose, and the lower from the mouth.

From the ears came out ten linear *Sephirot* from the left ear, and ten encircling *Sephirot* from the right ear, they went down until the beard on the chin. From the nose, came out ten encircling *Sephirot* from the right nostril, and ten linear from the left nostril, they went down until the chest, closer together than the lights from the ears, but still separated. The lights of the encircling *Sephirot* are of a finer aspect, which is why they came out of the right side; the side of 'Hesed [kindness], as opposed to the left; which is of the side of *Gevurah* [rigor]. In the emanations [lights] of the ears and nose, there is not yet a concept of *Keli* [vessel].

The lower [*Ta'amim*] came out from the mouth, ten internal [*Sephirot*], and ten encircling [*Sephirot*], in this way was revealed the ד of the ה, with four Aleph [אאאא] two יי, and two יוד.

From the two ears and the two nostrils; two vapors from the right side of the mouth, and two utterances from the left side, they are rooted in

יצאו התחתונים מן הפה,
י' פנימים וי' מקיפים,
ונתגלתה הד' שבה' בד' אלפין,
שנים יי, ושנים יוד.

מב' אזנים ומב' נחירים –
ב' הבלים בימינו של הפה
ושני דיבורים בשמאלו,
נשרשים בב' לחיים - עליון
ותחתון.
יוצאין ויורדין עד הטבור.

the two jaws, upper and lower. They come out, and descend until the navel.

From the mouth of *Adam Kadmon*, ten interior, and ten encircling *Sephirot* came out; they were of the aspect of the lower *Ta'amim*. They returned inside the mouth to be completed, and came out again, they are called "returning lights". These lights came out from the same conduit, intermingled; and this is how the concept of *Keli* came to be. They spread down until the navel, but in one unique *Keli*. Since the ears and nose have two separate channels, their respective encircling and interior lights did not join, and thus stayed at a distance of each other. The mouth being one single channel, a *Keli* was needed to hold the interior lights, and to separate them from the more tenuous encircling lights.

d) *Malkhut* came out³⁵ first, followed by Z'A, and than the others [*Sephirot* until *Keter*]. The force [the consistence] of the *Keli* was absorbed in them³⁶.

The most tenuous³⁷ returned and entered³⁸,

ד. יצאו ראשונה,
מלכות בתחלה, וז"א אחריה, וכן
כולם.
וכח הכלי בלוע בהם.

הדק שבהם חזר ונכנס,
כתר בתחלה וכולם אחרייו.

³⁵ From the mouth of *Adam Kadmon*

³⁶ The lights of the mouth of *Adam Kadmon*

³⁷ Of the lights

³⁸ In the mouth of *Adam Kadmon*

Keter first, followed by the others. The rest [which did not return] thickened, and a *Keli* was made from the sparks that fell there from the collision of the returning higher light, with the trace³⁹ of the lower [light].

At first, they were all [of the aspect of] Nefashot. They gained from each other by coming out, and by returning; each one as it deserved, until the second encircling⁴⁰. *Keter* stayed in the mouth of A`K, the nine remaining [Sefirot] came out, until *Malkhut* was left as a *Keli* without light.

All the *Kelim* made one [unique] *Keli*, but with ten gradations. This is the [world of] Ha'Akudim.⁴¹

נתעבה הנשאר,
ונעשה כלי מניצוצות שנפלו בו
מהכאת אור חזרתו של עליון
ורשימו של תחתון.

בראשונה היו כלם נפשות.
הריחו זה מזה ביציאתם וכן
בחזרתם,
כל אחד כראוי לו, עד מקיף שני.
נשאר הכתר בפה דא"ק,
ושאר התשעה יצאו,
עד שנמצאת מלכות כלי בלי אור.

כל הכלים כלי אחד,
אלא שעשר שנתות יש לו,
זה עקודים.

³⁹ Each light when ascending, leaves a trace (imprint)

⁴⁰ For *Malkhut* only

⁴¹ Attached

Similar to the lights which have two aspects; interior and encircling, the *Keli* also has two aspects; interior and exterior. When the *Sephirot* came out the first time from the mouth, each one had its own place, but in one unique *Keli*; this is called the world of *Ha'Akudim* [the attached]. They returned to their origin in the mouth but not completely, each one leaving its trace. Only the most tenuous part of the lights returned, the ones that remained thickened, but were still illuminated by their own part that ascended. The lights strike each other and produced sparks, which formed the *Kelim* for the more tenuous lights that had returned the second time. When the light of *Keter* went back up, it did not come out again; *'Hokhma* came out and took its place, *Binah* took the place of *'Hokhma*, and so on, until *Malkhut* was left with no light, like a “non luminous mirror” (ספקלריא דלא נהרא)

This is considered as an annulment, but not as important as the one in *'Olam Hanikudim*, as we will see latter on.